

493 Message in Reply to a Broadcast by Chairman Khrushchev
on the Cuban Crisis. October 28, 1962

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am replying at once to your broadcast message of October twenty-eight, even though the official text has not yet reached me, because of the great importance I attach to moving forward promptly to the settlement of the Cuban crisis. I think that you and I, with our heavy responsibilities for the maintenance of peace, were aware that developments were approaching a point where events could have become unmanageable. So I welcome this message and consider it an important contribution to peace.

The distinguished efforts of Acting Secretary General U Thant have greatly facilitated both our tasks. I consider my letter to you of October twenty-seventh and your reply of today as firm undertakings on the part of both our governments which should be promptly carried out. I hope that the necessary measures can at once be taken through the United Nations, as your message says, so that the United States in turn will be able to remove the quarantine measures now in effect. I have already made arrangements to report all these matters to the Organization of American States, whose members share a

deep interest in a genuine peace in the Caribbean area.

You referred in your letter to a violation of your frontier by an American aircraft in the area of the Chukotskiy Peninsula. I have learned that this plane, without arms or photographic equipment, was engaged in an air sampling mission in connection with your nuclear tests. Its course was direct from Eielson Air Force Base in Alaska to the North Pole and return. In turning south, the pilot made a serious navigational error which carried him over Soviet territory. He immediately made an emergency call on open radio for navigational assistance and was guided back to his home base by the most direct route. I regret this incident and will see to it that every precaution is taken to prevent recurrence.

Mr. Chairman, both of our countries have great unfinished tasks and I know that your people as well as those of the United States can ask for nothing better than to pursue them: free from the fear of war. Modern science and technology have given us the possibility of making labor fruitful beyond anything that could have been dreamed of a few decades ago.

I agree with you that we must devote urgent attention to the problem of disarmament, as it relates to the whole world and also to critical areas. Perhaps now, as we

step back from danger, we can together make real progress in this vital field. I think we should give priority to questions relating to the proliferation of nuclear weapons, on earth and in outer space, and to the great effort for a nuclear test ban. But we should also work hard to see if wider measures of disarmament can be agreed and put into operation at an early date. The United States Government will be prepared to discuss these questions urgently, and in a constructive spirit, at Geneva or elsewhere.

JOHN F. KENNEDY

NOTE: For the President's letter of October 27, see Item 492. An unofficial translation of Mr. Khrushchev's reply is printed in the Department of State Bulletin (vol. 47, p. 743). He expressed satisfaction with the President's message of October 27 and stated his understanding of U.S. concern in connection with the weapons "you regard as offensive." The Chairman added that the Soviet Government had ordered that the weapons be dismantled, crated, and returned to Russia, and he stated that "we are prepared to reach agreement to enable U.N. representatives to verify the dismantling of these means."

Mr. Khrushchev further stated that the Soviet weapons were defensive in character and had been sent to Cuba because the Cuban people were under "continuous threat of invasion." Referring to violations of Soviet and Cuban airspace by American planes as dangerous, he concluded by affirming his belief that "reason will triumph, that war will not be unleashed, and [that] peace and the security of the peoples will be insured."

EXTRACT FOLLOWS

10/28

I agree with you that we should continue urgently our efforts to deal with other questions causing international tension and hope that we can progress in the fields of nuclear testing, general disarmament, and the problems related to relations between NATO and the States of the Warsaw Treaty.

I agree that we must devote urgent attention to the problems of general disarmament, as it relates to all States including those of the NATO and Warsaw Pact. Priority should be given to questions relating to the proliferation of nuclear weapons, on earth or in outer space, support for constructive proposals for denuclearization arrangements worked out by states in areas where such weapons do not exist; to determining whether progress may not be made, at long last, on a nuclear test ban, and to other measures to reduce international tension. Also, we should determine what wide measures of disarmament can be agreed and put into operation at an early date. The United States will be prepared to discuss these questions urgently in a constructive spirit at Geneva or elsewhere.

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You referred in your letter to a violation of your frontier by an American U-2 aircraft in the area of the Chukotka Peninsula. I ordered an immediate investigation of this incident and can inform you as follows:

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go*

This plane was engaged on an air-sampling mission in connection with the nuclear tests being carried out in your country. Its course was to the North Pole and it had been ordered not to come within one hundred miles of Soviet territory. The pilot reported that his navigation instruments, of which he had only one set because of the weight problem in this type of plane, had failed and that he was completely lost. I regret this incident and recognize that a frontier violation, particularly in time of high tension, could be misinterpreted. I have therefore given orders that even greater precautions be taken to avoid the possibility of such an incident and am pursuing further the investigation of which the foregoing is a preliminary report.

You referred in your letter to a violation of your frontier by an American U-2 aircraft in the area of the Chukotka Peninsula. I ordered an immediate investigation of this incident and can inform you as follows:

This plane was engaged on an air-sampling mission in connection with the nuclear tests being carried out in your country. Its ^{plan} course was to the North Pole and it had been ordered not to come within one hundred miles of Soviet territory. The pilot reported that his navigation instruments, of which he had only one set because of the weight problem in this type of plane, had failed and that he was completely lost. I regret this incident and recognize that a frontier violation, particularly in time of high tension, could be misinterpreted. I have therefore given orders that even greater precautions be taken to avoid the possibility of such an incident and am pursuing further the investigation of which the foregoing is a preliminary report.

DRAFT FOLLOWS

DRAFT

October 28, 1962

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am replying at once to your broadcast message of October twenty-eighth even though the official text has not yet reached me because of the great importance I attach to our moving forward promptly to carry forward the settlement of the Cuban crisis. I think that you and I, with our heavy responsibilities for the maintenance of peace, were aware that developments were approaching a point where events could have taken control and the situation had become unmanageable, because of the vicious cycle that was building up.

I am sure that you will agree that the noble efforts of Acting Secretary General U Thant have greatly facilitated both our tasks. I consider that my letter to you of October twenty-sixth and your reply of today as ^{an} ~~solemn commitment~~ ^{firm undertaking} on the part of both our governments which should be implemented promptly ^{carried out} as there are many other problems affecting peace which require attention. ~~It is~~ ^{we are} ~~desirous of removing as quickly~~

as possible the quarantine measures which are now in effect and ^{hope} ~~are~~ ^{establish the effective} ~~hopeful~~ that the United Nations can immediately take the necessary steps to eliminate ^{the} ~~the~~ need for surveillance on our part of Cuban territory ^{and to permit the prompt removal of quarantine measures now in effect}.

up, in order to remove the

*The United States Government will
be able to discuss these
matters with
him*

You have undertaken to remove what I have called offensive weapons from Cuba and I have assured you that no attack will be made on Cuba. I trust that the discussions under the auspices of U Thant and the arrangements for the United Nations to carry out its role can be quickly concluded. The other Latin American nations that are deeply involved in this problem will, I hope, also proceed urgently to consider the further actions that need to be taken and I am sure that a Cuba clearly committed to a peaceful course need have no fear from them.

Mr. Chairman, both of our countries have great unfinished tasks and I know that your people as well as those of the United States can ask for nothing better than to pursue them free from the fear of war. Modern science and technology have given us the possibility of making labor fruitful beyond anything that could have been dreamed of a few decades ago.

USIA { I have already made arrangements to report on these matters to the Organization of American States whose members share a deep genuine interest in a genuine peace in the Caribbean area.

FORWARDED COPY FOLLOWS

OUTGOING TELEGRAM Department of State

DUPLICATE ☐ COLLECT
CHARGE TO

UNCLASSIFIED

Classification

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Oct 28 5 03 PM '62

ACTION: AMEmbassy MOSCOW 1210 ATACT

Rpt Info: AMEmbassy PARIS 2387 PRIORITY
AMEmbassy LONDON 2353 Priority
USUN NEW YORK 1129 PRIORITY

Following is text President's reply to Khrushchev letter of October 28 for delivery to highest available Soviet official. Text has been handed to Soviet Embassy and released by White House at 4:35 PM.

Begin text

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The distinguished efforts of Acting Secretary General

U Thant have greatly facilitated both our tasks. I consider my letter

Drafted by: S/AL-L. Thompson

U: George W. Ball

Telegraph messages and
classifications approved by:

The Secretary

Clearance:

White House - Mr. Bundy

3/S - Mr. Davis

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Mr. Chairman

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/s/ John F. Kennedy

End Text

Rusk

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